ICD-10-CM Coding Tip

7th Character: Sequela (S)

Injury, poisoning, and certain other consequences of external causes (S00-T88).

In an effort to aid Health Information Management Coding and Medical Billing Professionals with ICD-10-CM, the following coding tip is provided with an educational intent.

The 7th character "S" is used for complications or conditions that arise as a direct result of a condition, such as a scar formation after a burn. The scars are sequela of the burn. A sequela is the residual effect (condition produced) after the acute phase of an illness or injury has terminated.

Use additional external cause code to identify the source, place, and intent of the burn if your office chooses to capture external cause codes.

Resource: ICD-10-CM Draft Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting 2015

- When using the 7th character "S", it is necessary to use both the injury code (e.g., burn) that precipitated the sequela and the code for the sequela (e.g., scar) itself.
- The specific type of sequela (e.g., scar) is sequenced first, followed by the injury code (e.g., burn).
- The "S" is added only to the injury code (e.g., burn) not the sequela code (e.g., scar).

Example:

L90.5	Scar conditions and fibrosis of skin
T22.212S	Burn of second degree of left forearm